

## Additional Resources

California Children and Families Commission  
501 J Street, Suite 530  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 323-0056  
[www.cffc.ca.gov](http://www.cffc.ca.gov)

Or contact your local County Children and Families Commission

California Department of Health Services  
Domestic Violence Section  
714 P Street, Room 540  
PO Box 942732  
Sacramento, CA 94234  
(916) 657-4643  
[www.safenetwork.net](http://www.safenetwork.net)

California Department of Social Services  
Office of Child Abuse Prevention  
744 P Street, MS 19-82  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-2771  
[www.dss.cahwnet.gov](http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov)

Office of Criminal Justice Planning  
Children's Branch  
1130 K Street, Suite 300  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 324-9100  
[www.ocjp.ca.gov](http://www.ocjp.ca.gov)

National Center for Children  
Exposed to Violence Child Study Center  
Yale University School of Medicine  
230 South Frontage Road  
P.O. Box 207900  
New Haven, CT 06520-7900  
[www.ncccv.org](http://www.ncccv.org)

Child Trauma Academy  
[www.childtrauma.org](http://www.childtrauma.org)

To access more resources, check out:

[www.safefromthestart.org](http://www.safefromthestart.org)

or email your questions and comments to:  
[sfts@doj.ca.gov](mailto:sfts@doj.ca.gov)

Or write or call the

**California Attorney General's  
Crime and Violence Prevention Center**

**Safe from the Start Project**  
1300 I Street, Suite 1150  
Sacramento, California 95814  
(916) 324-7863

California Attorney General's

# Safe from the Start

Reducing Children's Exposure To Violence



Funded in part by the California Children and Families  
Commission via Interagency Agreement #CCFC-6857.



**California Attorney General's Office  
Crime and Violence Prevention Center**

## What We Know

Children exposed to violence and maltreatment suffer increased depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, anger, alcohol and drug abuse and lower academic achievement. New scientific research is uncovering the physiological impact of violence on the developing human brain and the long-term consequences of this exposure.

- By the time a child reaches the age of 18, the probability that he or she will have experienced family or community violence, either as a victim or a witness, is one in four. Bruce Perry, M.D. Ph.D., Professor of Child Psychiatry, Child Trauma Academy, August 1999

- Childhood abuse and neglect increase the odds of arrest as a juvenile by 59 percent, arrest as an adult by 28 percent and arrest for a violent crime by 30 percent. National Institute of Justice Research Brief, February 2001

- In 2000, California reported that 666,497 children were referred for investigation of child abuse and neglect. State of California, Child Welfare Services, December, 2000

- California has the highest rate of juvenile incarceration in the country. National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2000. Incarceration costs California nearly \$48,000 per year, per child. California Youth Authority, 2001



### The Goal

The goal of the California Safe from the Start project is to assist local communities to improve the health and well-being of children exposed to violence and to reduce the number of children exposed to violence. Violence can impact children in their homes, neighborhoods, schools and parks.

The Attorney General's Office, along with the California Children and Families Commission, the California Health and Human Services Agency and other state and local agencies, is committed to actively supporting state and local community initiatives that address the impact of violence on children. The California Safe from the Start project is a first step to achieve this goal.

### The Objectives

- Educate local and state policymakers on the impact of violence on children and communities.
- Assist multi-disciplinary teams by identifying existing community resources, gaps in services and strategies for prevention and intervention.
- Direct local multi-disciplinary teams to potential funding sources.
- Identify and respond to local technical assistance requests.

### What Can I Do?

- Law enforcement can note in their crime reports the names of children who are witnesses of domestic violence. This will assist children and families in crisis in obtaining vital services through the California Victim's Compensation Fund.
- Educators can be trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of children exposed to violence. School administrators can assist and support children and families in referral to services.
- Health care and social service professionals can perform a dual role by identifying children who have witnessed violence and by educating the parents they come in contact with about the effects of violence on children.
- Mental health professionals can educate community members, especially young, first-time parents on the tremendous impact violence can have on children.

- Community members can take an active role in learning more about the research related to the impact of violence on "our" children. They can then share this information with friends, family, coworkers, legislators and community leaders. Children in California need to know that their community cares about their health and success.

### Summary

The California Safe from the Start project is a comprehensive strategy to assist communities in reducing the impact of violence on children. The Project was kicked off with a major Statewide Symposium in May 2000, followed by ten regional forums involving 57 counties and more than 1450 attendees. A Joint Legislative Hearing educated Senate and Assembly Members and their staff, and a policy report was produced with recommendations provided by forum participants.

The California Safe from the Start project will continue with multi-year activities which include:

- On-going training and technical assistance for local communities to help them begin or reevaluate systems, services and programs to serve children exposed to violence.
- A Guidebook including promising strategies, evaluation tools and funding sources.
- Videos created to educate the community on their role in responding to children exposed to violence and promising strategies.

